

Hurricane Harvey: 200 Indian students caught in Houston flooding being evacuated

At least 200 Indian students stranded at the University of Houston due to flooding after Hurricane Harvey hit Texas were being evacuated to safer places, say authorities

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Harvey, the most powerful hurricane to hit the US in 13 years, has left a trail of destruction as it swept through Texas after making landfall on Saturday, pummeling the region with heavy rains and claiming at least five lives. Photo: Reuters

Houston/New Delhi: At least 200 Indian students stranded at the University of Houston due to “catastrophic” flooding after Hurricane Harvey hit Texas were being evacuated to safer places, authorities said on Monday.

The students were being provided food and other supplies by the Indian-American community in the area. India’s Consul-General in Houston Anupam Ray has been in touch with the students and monitoring the evacuation process.

In New Delhi, external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj said two Indian students, Shalini and Nikhil Bhatia, have been admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). “@CGHoust has informed me that 200 Indian students at University of Houston are marooned. They are surrounded by neck deep water,” she tweeted.

The Indian side made efforts to deliver food but the US Coast Guard did not allow them as boats were required for rescue operations, Swaraj said in a series of tweets. She said the MEA was ensuring that the relatives of the hospitalised students reach the health facility at the earliest.

“Mr Anupam Ray our CG (consul general) Houston is organising the rescue operations,” she tweeted.

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The National Weather Service of the US has called the flooding in Texas “unprecedented”. “Catastrophic flooding is now underway and expected to continue for days,” the service said in a statement.

Sewa International Houston—along with several other Indian-American community organisations—has teamed up to provide food and shelter to the affected people. Major Indian organisations such as the India Cultural Centre, the India House, the Indo-American Charity Foundation and the Indo-American Political Action Committee have decided to coordinate their relief efforts through Sewa International.

Indian businesses and places of worship were providing shelter to displaced families. Indian restaurants were giving food packets to the people hit by the catastrophic flooding. Gitesh Desai, Sewa International’s president, said Houston residents were “staying strong through the crisis”. **PTI**

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